

Wildflower Weekend – 2009 Schedule

Saturday, May 9

***Wildflowers: What's the Connection?**

9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

The relationship between many flowers and insects is well known: one cannot live without the other. Is the connection between plants and humans as important? If so, what happens in a national park, where humans are not allowed to pick the flowers? Join photographers/naturalists/authors, Ann and Rob Simpson, as they investigate the masterful connections between plants and those who exploit them. Be prepared to meet some amazing wildflowers! Meet at Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51) for this PowerPoint presentation.

Ann and Rob Simpson, Naturalists and Professional Photographers

Marvelous Millers Head

9:30 a.m. to noon

Hike down a rocky ridge to an observation platform (elev. 3,465 ft.) and a wonderful view of the Shenandoah Valley. Some uncommon plants may be blooming here. Rocky, with steep uphill return. 1.6 mile. Total climb: about 450 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into **south** entrance of Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables and keep to left when road forks; park at top of hill, near new amphitheater.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Wildflower Discovery Hike

10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Join the Simpsons for a stroll in search of violets, jack-in-the-pulpit, blue cohosh, and other early blooming spring wildflowers along a short section of the Story of the Forest Trail. 1/2 mile. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Ann and Rob Simpson, Naturalists and Professional Photographers

Bugs and Blooms

11 a.m. to noon. Repeats at 2 p.m.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how plants and insects rely on each other in the meadow. Designed for children ages 7-12. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Regina Cardwell, Park Ranger

Appalachian Trail Beauties

1 to 3 p.m.

Search for wild geraniums, wood anemones, and other wildflowers representing many different families on this gentle section of the famous Georgia-to-Maine trail. 2 miles. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Sue Schaefer, Park Ranger

Wilderness Waterfall

1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Discover what's blooming in the woods on your way to Rose River Falls (67 ft. high). Follow tumbling cascades that lead to this delightful waterfall in the park's designated wilderness area. 2.7 miles. Total climb: about 720 ft. Meet at Fishers Gap Overlook (mile 49.4).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Bugs and Blooms

2 to 3 p.m. Repeat of 11 a.m. program.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how plants and insects rely on each other in the meadow. Designed for children ages 7-12. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Regina Cardwell, Park Ranger

Seeds of Inspiration

3:30 to 5 p.m.

"When I discovered a new plant, I sat down beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance and hear what it had to tell." -- John Muir

Cozy up to a flower or two and let them draw you into their world. Take time to closely observe nature and let your creative side blossom on this walk that includes journaling and drawing activities. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8) for a short hike on the Mill Prong Trail.

John Manka, Park Ranger

Nature Photography: Simply Beautiful

7:15 to 8:30 p.m.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine the message you can present with a fantastic photo from your digital or film camera! Ann and Rob Simpson will provide tips on the basics of photography, including composition techniques to transform an ordinary shot into an amazing one. The program will be helpful for advanced camera users as well. Bring your camera and your questions. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51) for this PowerPoint presentation and demonstration.

Ann and Rob Simpson, Naturalists and Professional Photographers

Sunday, May 10

Spring Birds

9 to 11:30 a.m.

The high mountain springs here (elev. 2,665 ft.) served local residents and travelers crossing the Blue Ridge years ago. Now the wetland forest habitat attracts various species of birds. See who's flitting and singing around the springs and nearby trails on this gentle walk. 1 mile. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**

Alan Williams, Shenandoah National Park Ecologist

Wildflower Photography Workshop

9:30 to 11 a.m.

If you're serious about taking better photos of wildflowers and other small objects, Ann and Rob Simpson will show you how to improve your techniques for taking professional-looking photographs. Bring your camera (any type) and any flash equipment that you might have. Beginner to advanced techniques will be demonstrated. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

Ann and Rob Simpson, Naturalists and Professional Photographers

Wonders of the Mill Prong

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Singing birds, a babbling stream, ferns, and a wide variety of wildflowers make this one of the most enchanting trails to explore. Changes in elevation, aspect, and forest type will have you wondering what's blooming around the next bend. 2.5 miles. Total climb: about 430 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Tom Dierauf, Volunteer Naturalist

Big Meadows Stroll

10 to 11:30 a.m.

Learn about the effects of fire, deer, cattle, and people on plant life in this unusual mountaintop meadow. 1/2 mile. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

South River Falls Hike

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Violets, wild geraniums, and many more flowers greet hikers on this trail to a viewpoint overlooking the third-highest waterfall in the park (83 ft.). Strenuous but lovely. 3.3 miles. Total climb: about 910 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River Picnic Area (mile 62.8). Bring lunch or snack.

Sally Hurlbert, Park Ranger

***Baldface Mountain Discovery Hike**

1:30 to 4 p.m.

See what the Appalachian Trail has in store as we hike southbound from Pocosin Cabin. Even we don't know what we'll find on this brand new hike, so come and be surprised along with us! 2 miles. Total climb: about 600 ft. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5, **unmarked**, east side of Skyline Drive).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Gravel Spring-Bluff Trail

2 to 5 p.m.

Join our park botanist for a brief and fun introduction to botany basics, then explore the spring area and see what's blooming along the Bluff Trail. 2 miles. Total climb: about 200 ft. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**

Wendy Cass, Shenandoah National Park Botanist

* Indicates programs that are new this year.